United Nations A/61/261

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 August 2006

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Item 87 (aa) of the provisional agenda*
General and complete disarmament: transparency in armaments

Continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

Note by the Secretary-General

1. By its resolution 60/226 of 23 December 2005, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to a decision at its sixty-first session.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the above-mentioned report, prepared with the assistance of the Group of Governmental Experts, on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development.

* A/61/150.

06-46871 (E) 130906

Report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

Summary

The report of the 2006 Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, inter alia, provides an analysis of the available data on reporting by States; an assessment of the operation of the Register, including its regional aspects and a detailed examination of issues related to its further development, taking into account developments in armaments and military doctrines as well as the importance of strengthening the Register's relevance and achieving progress towards universal participation.

The report concludes that the Register has made significant progress since its establishment in 1992 and the United Nations Secretariat should continue to play a central role in facilitating the sustained progress of the Register. It makes a number of recommendations to strengthen the operation of the Register and its further development. These notably include the following: international transfers of conventional arms involving only States Members of the United Nations should be reported to the Register; Member States in a position to do so can report their transfers of small arms and light weapons on the basis of a standardized form and as part of additional background information; and the reporting threshold for warships (and submarines) be lowered from 750 metric tons to 500 metric tons.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
	Foreword by the Secretary-General		5
	Letter of transmittal		6
I.	Introduction	1–18	10
	A. Establishment of the Register	1–3	10
	B. Review of the Register	4–18	10
II.	Review of reports submitted to the Register	19–46	12
	A. General	19	12
	B. Extent of participation	20–28	13
	C. Reports on exports and imports	29	14
	D. Reports on additional background information	30–32	14
	E. Assessment of reporting	33–46	15
III.	Regional aspects	47–68	17
	A. Developments since the last review	47–61	17
	B. Assessment of the workshop series	62–63	19
	C. Enhancing implementation at the regional level	64–68	19
IV.	Operation of the Register	69–82	20
	A. Reporting methods	69–73	20
	B. Contacts among Member States	74–75	21
	C. Access to data and information reported	76–79	21
	D. Role of the United Nations Secretariat	80–82	22
V.	Development of the Register	83–108	23
	A. General	83–88	23
	B. Relevance of the Register	89–91	24
	C. Categories covered by the Register	92–99	24
	D. Expansion of the scope of the Register	100–107	26
	E. Review of the Register	108	27
VI.	Conclusions and recommendations	109–127	28
	A. Conclusions	109–122	28
	B. Recommendations	123–127	29

Annexes

I. Information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons (exports) 33

II. Information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons (imports) 34

III. List of documents 35

Foreword by the Secretary-General

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms plays a valuable role in the world's efforts to discourage the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. By building up our knowledge about international transfers of arms, it can help to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. Such transparency, in turn, can help to build confidence and trust, which are essential ingredients in stemming the flow of deadly weapons.

It is therefore gratifying to note that the Register has made significant progress since the last review in 2003, as reflected in the present consensus report by the Group of Governmental Experts. I welcome the important gains being made towards wider participation and greater transparency in the Register. The Group has also put forward a number of recommendations for strengthening the Register further still. In particular, it has agreed on a standardized form for reporting transfers of small arms and light weapons among States, on an optional basis. This marks a step towards overcoming the lack of transparency in that area, and should also help in combating illicit trafficking of those arms.

While the Group was not able to achieve consensus on some other issues, such as technical adjustments to some categories of equipment covered by the Register, it engaged in serious and in-depth discussions on those matters. Indeed, the spirit of commitment and compromise displayed by the Group has created a sound basis for further consensus-building during the next review.

At a time when the international community faces major challenges in pursuing disarmament and upholding the non-proliferation regime, the positive outcome of the Group's deliberations is especially welcome. I thank the members of the Group for their hard work in preparing the present report, which I commend to the General Assembly for its consideration.

Letter of transmittal

28 July 2006

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The Group was appointed by you in pursuance of paragraph 4 (*b*) of General Assembly resolution 60/226 of 23 December 2005.

Mr. Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

The governmental experts appointed were the following:

Mr. Witjaksono Adji (third session)
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Mohammad Kamran Akhtar
Director (Disarmament)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan
Islamabad

Mr. Hamid Baeidi-Nejad (second and third sessions)
Director of Disarmament and International Security
Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Tehran

Mr. Alon Bar
Director of the Arms Control Department
Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Jerusalem

Dr. Gerardo Bravo (second and third sessions)
Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Defense of Nicaragua
Managua

Mr. Jandyr Ferreira dos Santos Jr.
Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Matthias Halter
Deputy Head
Arms Control and Disarmament Policy
Federal Department of Defense of Switzerland
Civil Protection and Sports
Bern

Colonel George Igumba (third session)
Military Adviser
Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations
New York

Ms. Onny Kitty Hiltje Jalink
Security Policy Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
The Hague

Commander Franck Le Biannic
Chargé de mission aux affairs internationales
Ministère de la Defénse, France
Paris

Mr. Li Song (second and third sessions)
Counsellor
Permanent Mission of People's Republic of China to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Mauritz Carel Lindeque
Deputy-Director
Biological, Chemical, Missile and Arms Control
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Africa
Pretoria

Mr. William Malzahn
Foreign Affairs Officer
Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation
Office of Multilateral Nuclear and Security Affairs
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Hiroshi Matsumoto
Senior Research Fellow and Policy Director
Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
Japan Institute of International Affairs
Tokyo

His Excellency Mr. Roberto García Moritán
Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina
Buenos Aires

Mr. Oleksandr Moskvitin (second and third sessions)
Deputy Director
Arms Control and Military-Technical Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
Kiev

Mr. Reza Najafi (first session)
Second Counsellor
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Sergey Y. Petlyakov
Chief Counsellor, Department for Security and Disarmament Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
Moscow

Rear Admiral Willem Rampangilei (first and second sessions)
Minister Counsellor/Military Adviser
Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Anatoliy Scherba (first session)
Director-General for Arms Control and Military-Technical Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ukraine

Mr. Coly Seck
Counsellor
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Senegal to the United Nations
New York

Mr. Naveen Srivastava (second and third sessions)
Director
Disarmament and International Security Affairs
Ministry of External Affairs of India
New Delhi

Mr. Andrew Wood
Head of Export Control Policy
Counter-Proliferation and Arms Control
Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland
London

Mr. Wu Haitao (first session)
Deputy Director-General
Department of Arms Control and Disarmament
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China
Beijing

The report was prepared between February and July 2006, during which the Group held three sessions in New York: the first from 27 February to 3 March, the second from 8 to 12 May, and the third from 17 to 28 July.

The Group was able to reach agreement on some important issues related to the operation and further development of the Register. Although consensus could not be achieved on other issues, the periodic review of the Register provides opportunity for further consensus-building to ensure the continued progress of the Register as a global arms transparency instrument.

The members of the Group wish to express their appreciation for the assistance they received from members of the Secretariat of the United Nations. In particular, they wish to thank Mr. Nazir Kamal, who served as Secretary of the Group; and Ms. Sarah Meek, who served as consultant to the Group. The Group is also grateful to Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the support received from him.

I have been requested by the Group of Governmental Experts, as its Chairman, to submit to you, on its behalf, the present report which was approved by consensus.

(*Signed*) Roberto García **Moritán**
Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts
on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

I. Introduction

A. Establishment of the Register

1. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was established under General Assembly resolution 46/36 L of 9 December 1991, entitled "Transparency in armaments", in which the Assembly called upon all Member States to provide data annually on exports and imports of conventional arms in the seven categories covered by the Register and also invited them, pending the expansion of the Register, to provide available background information on their military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies.

2. General Assembly resolution 46/36 L was preceded by a "Study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms" (A/46/301, annex), undertaken by a group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General. The report unanimously advocated the establishment of a United Nations Register to promote the objectives of the study.

3. Pursuant to resolution 46/36 L, the Secretary-General convened a panel of technical experts in 1992 to operationalize the Register. Endorsing the report of the Secretary-General containing the recommendations (A/47/342 and Corr.1) of the Panel, the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/52 L of 15 December 1992, called upon all Member States to provide the requested data and information to the Secretary-General annually, beginning in 1993. In its recommendations, the Panel had also proposed that the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the data and information submitted by Member States should be open to the public.

B. Review of the Register

4. In its resolution 46/36 L, the General Assembly called for an initial review in 1994 of the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. The 1992 report of the panel of technical experts also envisaged future reviews to address those issues. As a result, the Register has been periodically reviewed thus far at three-year intervals.

1994 Group of Governmental Experts

5. By its resolution 49/75 C of 15 December 1994, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the 1994 Group of Governmental Experts (A/49/316), and decided to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review, requesting Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction.

1997 Group of Governmental Experts

6. By its resolution 52/38 R of 9 December 1997, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the 1997 Group of Governmental Experts (see A/52/316 and Corr.2), which proposed extending the reporting deadline from 30 April to 31 May, encouraged information on national points of contact and use of the

"Remarks" column in the reporting format. It also recommended the inclusion of data provided voluntarily on procurement through national production and military holdings in the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

7. The General Assembly also adopted resolution 52/38 B of the same date, in which it requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on enhancing transparency in the fields of weapons of mass destruction and transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons.

2000 Group of Governmental Experts

8. The 2000 Group of Governmental Experts was established under General Assembly resolutions 54/54 O and 54/54 I of 1 December 1999. By its resolution 54/54 O, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development.

9. By its resolution 54/54 I, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the early expansion of the scope of the Register and the elaboration of practical means for the development of the Register in order to increase transparency related to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons.

10. The Group of Governmental Experts recognized the importance of the principle of transparency and its relevance to weapons of mass destruction. Particularly taking into account that the Register covered conventional arms only, however, the Group agreed that the question of transparency in weapons of mass destruction was an issue that should be addressed by the General Assembly.

11. The recommendations of the Group notably included a simplified form for the filing of "nil" returns; updating the United Nations information on the Register; and, with the assistance of interested States, the holding of regional or subregional workshops, seminars and other activities to encourage greater participation in the Register. A feasibility study on the electronic filing of national submissions to the Register was also recommended. By its resolution 55/33 U of 20 November 2000, the General Assembly endorsed the report of the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts (see A/55/281).

2003 Group of Governmental Experts

12. The 2003 Group of Governmental Experts was established by the Secretary-General under General Assembly resolution 57/75 of 22 November 2002.

13. The Group was able to reach agreement on technical adjustments to two of the seven existing categories of the Register, namely, the inclusion on an exceptional basis of, Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) in category VII under "missiles and missile-launchers"; and the lowering of the reporting threshold of large-calibre artillery systems from 100 mm to 75 mm in category III of the Register.

14. The Group also made some progress on international transfers of small arms and light weapons within the Register's framework. It noted that interested Member States in a position to do so, could provide additional information on transfers of

small arms and light weapons made or modified to military specification and intended for military use, and recommended that, where national, subregional and regional mechanisms exist, interested Member States could make use of those reporting methods, including definitions of small arms and light weapons, as they deem appropriate.

15. In addition, the Group recommended that the Department for Disarmament Affairs should continue to play a central role in promoting the progress of the Register and the workshop series, initiated after the 2000 review, should be sustained, focusing on regions and subregions that had not yet hosted a workshop, as well as returning to regions and subregions periodically, in order to strengthen the progress of the Register and receive feedback for its further development.

16. The Group concluded that the Register had made significant progress since its inception and that it had entered a period of increased participation. Renewed efforts were now required to ensure reporting on a regular basis and progress towards universal participation, as well as continued attention to its further development and increased relevance.

17. By its resolution 58/54 of 8 December 2003, the General Assembly endorsed the report of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts (see A/58/274).

2006 Group of Governmental Experts

18. The 2006 Group of Governmental Experts was established under General Assembly resolution 60/226 of 23 December 2005, which requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on the subject.

II. Review of reports submitted to the Register

A. General

19. For the purpose of analysis, the Group of Governmental Experts had at its disposal the data and information submitted by Governments for the Register for the calendar years 1992-2004 inclusive[1] as well as tables and graphs compiled by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.[2] The Group also had before it the views of Member States on the operation of the Register and its further development, submitted to the Secretary-General. On the basis of that data and information, the Group reviewed the functioning of the Register with a view to making recommendations for enhancing its operation and further development.

[1] Submissions in 2006 for the calendar year 2005 are still ongoing. The latest completed calendar year is 2004 for which submissions were received in 2005.

[2] The tables and graphs can be accessed at http://disarmament .un.org/cab/register.html.

B. Extent of participation

20. Since the inception of the Register, over 90 Governments have submitted reports each year on arms transfers, with the exception of calendar year 1998. The number of submissions for calendar years 2000-2004 increased significantly over all previous years. In 2000 a total of 118 Governments submitted reports on arms transfers, the number increasing to 126 in 2001 and 123 in 2002. In calendar year 2003 and calendar year 2004, 115 and 116 reports were received, respectively. Although the highest number so far was recorded for calendar year 2001, the level of participation continues to remain relatively high. The Group viewed positively the increase in reporting during calendar years 1999-2004.

21. As at 28 July 2006, a total of 170 States have participated in the Register at least once by reporting on international arms transfers and/or by providing additional background information.[3] During the 13 years of operation of the Register, 142 States have participated three or more times, 101 have participated at least seven times, 50 have participated in all the years, while 25 have never participated.

22. The Group observed that the Register covers the great bulk of the global arms trade in the seven categories of conventional arms, as almost all significant suppliers and recipients of those weapons submit reports regularly. In addition, the Register is able to capture a number of transfers involving non-participating States.

23. Even though some States may not participate in a given year or may have never participated, the Register captures transfers involving many of them. For the latest completed calendar year 2004, 22 countries which had not participated in that year were reported upon by other countries declaring their exports and imports. For calendar year 2003, the number was 23. Previously, for calendar years 2001 and 2002, the additional number of countries captured by the Register was 27 for each year.

24. In other words, although 116 States participated for calendar year 2004 and 115 States participated for calendar year 2003, the Register covered transfers involving a total of 138 States for each year. Of these additional 23 States, more than 10 have never participated in the Register. For calendar year 2001, although 126 States participated, the Register captured transfers involving 153 States. Of the 27 additional States, 15 have never participated in the Register. Similarly, for calendar year 2002, 123 States submitted reports, while the Register captured additional 27 States, including 13 States that have never participated.

25. In noting the increase in "nil" returns in recent years, the Group recognized the continuing importance of reporting "nil" transfers in order to confirm that no transfer had taken place. The Group also noted that a substantial percentage of participating States had submitted "nil" reports for each of the 13 years. For calendar year 2004, for example, 64 States submitted "nil" returns out of a total of 116 participating Governments, representing close to 60 per cent of the total.

26. Despite the increase in the submission of "nil" returns, there are still a number of potentially "nil" reporting States that have not yet participated in the Register.

[3] Includes Cook Islands, the Holy See and Niue (non-Member States).

Their participation would help to move the Register closer to the goal of universal participation, thereby contributing to the continued progress of the Register.

27. The Group also observed that some "nil" reporting States were not consistent in their participation. For example, 13 States that had participated in calendar year 2003 by submitting a "nil" report but did not participate in calendar year 2004 would most likely have submitted a "nil" return.

28. The level of participation varied from region to region, remaining low in some subregions. The pattern remained broadly consistent in some regions, while it fluctuated in other regions or subregions. Participation by region, based on a United Nations list of regional groups, as well as additional data showing ratios within some geographical regions, can be accessed on the Register website maintained by the Department for Disarmament Affairs (http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html).

C. Reports on exports and imports

29. The Group observed that the number of States reporting exports or imports remained relatively stable throughout the period under review, on average recording some 25 and 40 Member States each year, respectively. For calendar year 2004, 28 Member States reported on exports and 41 on imports, compared to 25 and 40 and 26 and 37 for calendar years 2003 and 2002, respectively. The number of States reporting both exports and imports also remained relatively stable, averaging at around 16 each year.

D. Reports on additional background information

30. The number of States reporting procurement through national production and military holdings has varied. So far, the highest number of reports was achieved for calendar year 2000, when 29 and 34 States, respectively, reported on procurement and holdings. For the latest calendar year 2004, a total of 15 and 28 States submitted reports on procurement and holdings, respectively. The number of States submitting "nil" reports on procurement has fluctuated during 2000-2004, with 10 States submitting "nil" reports in 2000 and 2001, 9 in 2002, 7 in 2003 and only 2 in 2004. The number of States providing information in their reports has remained fairly consistent during 2000-2004. A significant majority of those States provided information on the model and type of equipment reported. The Group recognized the importance of "nil" reporting on procurement through national production, as well as the value of providing information on model and type.

31. Many States had reported national policies relevant to the Register only once and thereafter reported only changes or additions as they occurred. A total of 37 Member States had provided such information, starting with 27 for calendar year 1992 and 5 for calendar year 2004.

32. In terms of voluntary reporting on transfers of small arms and light weapons, a limited number of States have reported such information since the recommendation was made by the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts. For calendar year 2003, five States reported transfers and in calendar year 2004, six States reported such information.

E. Assessment of reporting

33. While appreciating the increase in participation in recent years, the Group noted the importance of continued progress towards the goal of universal participation. Universality of participation would greatly increase the value of the Register as a global confidence-building measure. Furthermore, failure to report by the exporter and importer created uncertainty regarding the accuracy of the reported data.

34. Reporting on a consistent basis was important to consolidate the progress achieved so far in raising the level of participation in recent years and also to provide a basis for analysis of trends over time. In a number of cases, however, participation lacked consistency, which wider participation would help to alleviate.

35. The Group believed that non-participation or inconsistent participation could be attributed to various factors, including political considerations and inadequate institutional capacity. In some cases, States did not possess equipment covered by the Register or engage in transfers of such equipment. In addition, some States may not consider the Register to be sufficiently relevant to their security concerns. The existing scope and parameters of the Register could also be reason for inconsistent or non-participation by some States. In some cases, armed conflicts, severe political crises, or other negative developments in the international and regional security situation could contribute to non-reporting on transfers, as well as non-reporting of additional background information.

36. The Group noted with satisfaction the high incidence of use of the simplified "nil" reporting form, which was recommended by the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts to simplify the procedure for reporting a "nil" return and to encourage participation by "nil" reporting States.

37. Reporting by the 31 May deadline[4] has varied during the period under review. After achieving a high of 86 submissions for calendar year 2001, the number declined to 43 and 47 for calendar years 2003 and 2004, respectively, but increased significantly to 62 for calendar year 2005. While States may report at any time, prompt reporting enables the consolidated report of the Secretary-General to contain as much data as possible for consideration by the General Assembly at its regular annual session and to make such data publicly available at the earliest opportunity.

38. The Group noted significant variations in participation levels among regions. Changes in regional or subregional security and/or political situations could play a role in the pattern of reporting from regions in a given year. The long-term trend, however, has been towards higher reporting from all regions, except at some subregional levels.

39. The Group observed that the number of participating States using the "Remarks" column in the reporting form to provide details of equipment transferred, had remained relatively high over the 13 years of reporting. Almost all the 51 States reporting transfers for calendar year 2004 had used the "Remarks" column to provide a description of types and models, though not necessarily for all the categories reported.

[4] The deadline for submission was changed from 30 April to 31 May by the 1997 Group (see para. 6 of the present report).

40. The use of the "Remarks" column helped in understanding the data provided and in identifying or reducing discrepancies, thereby adding considerable value to the Register. The Group noted that such information on models and types added clarity and quality to reporting.

41. Mismatches continued to occur on transfers reported by exporters and importers, such as the number of items transferred, the date of transfer and the type of equipment transferred.

42. In the absence of a common definition of transfer, different national practices continued to contribute to mismatches in the Register. In this regard, the Group noted that provision of information in the reporting form of national criteria on transfers and consultations among the suppliers and recipients prior to submitting reports would assist in preventing mismatches.

43. With regard to reporting on additional background information, the Group noted that most reports on procurement through national production and military holdings had provided data on the seven categories of the Register and a number of States had reported regularly on background information. The Group noted the variation in reporting on procurement and observed that a decline in "nil" reports mainly accounted for the variation. Only a small number of States had provided additional background information on small arms and light weapons. The Group also noted that the continued dissemination of additional background information, where possible, strengthened the Register's confidence-building objectives.

44. The Group discussed the impact of adjustments made to categories III and VII, as agreed by the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts, but found that sufficient time had not elapsed to provide a basis for assessment, as data was only available for two calendar years subsequent to those changes. The Group noted that enhancing specific recommendations of the 2003 Group could better assist States in providing information to the Register.

45. On national points of contact, the number of States providing that information as requested in the reporting forms had increased since the last review from 85 to 122, though in some cases the information was incomplete.

46. The Group noted the increased visibility enjoyed by the Register since the last review, as reflected in the following documents: report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2005/69); report of the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibilities" (A/59/565 and Corr.1); letter from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/83); and report of the Secretary-General entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy" (A/60/825).

III. Regional aspects

A. Developments since the last review

47. The Group reviewed reporting to the Register across regions and assessed the factors that could contribute to participation levels. While noting variations in reporting at the regional level, it observed that the overall trend indicated a high level of acceptance of and support for the Register.

48. In examining regional variations, the Group noted that the Register's relevance and its existing scope remained an important consideration for some States, while other factors also affected participation. For example, regional situations in some cases could create limitations. The Group noted that, in view of different security conditions, complementary confidence- and security-building measures and other efforts to enhance security should take account of specific concerns and security perceptions, thereby facilitating greater participation by the regions.

49. With regard to additional background information, the Group noted the factors that may affect reporting on procurement through national production, military holdings and small arms and light weapons, notably security considerations, capacity and, in some cases, the willingness of other States to report additional information.

Africa

50. Overall participation in the Register by African countries has historically been the lowest among the regions. Participation levels have fluctuated, with the highest level of 17 out of 53 States achieved for calendar years 2001 and 2002, and 16 for 2004. While the figure for calendar year 2003 was lower, overall participation since 1999 has risen. The Group also noted reporting by some countries emerging from conflict. Consistency in reporting has also fluctuated. In 2004 a number of States that had reported in prior years, but had not reported in 2003, submitted reports.

51. Participants at the two regional workshops on transparency held in sub-Saharan Africa affirmed the value of the Register, while noting that reasons for non-participation include: their transparency concerns which are primarily related to small arms and light weapons that are not currently included in the seven categories of the Register; national capacity to prepare annual submissions; awareness of the Register, its purpose and reporting requirements; tensions within subregions; and concerns over national security related to transparency measures.

52. The Group noted the relevant achievements that have been made in the subregion since the last review with regard to enhanced efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. These include: the entry into force of the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, in the Southern African Development Community in 2004; the signing of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa in April 2004 and its entry into force in May 2006; and the signing of the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, and Other Related Materials on 14 June 2006.

The Americas

53. Overall participation from the Americas has increased since 1998. Generally, participation has increased each year, from a low of 13 States in 1998 to the highest number, 26 States, reporting in calendar year 2001. Consistency in reporting has generally been high, although there are subregional variations.

54. The Group reviewed possible reasons for lower reporting within some subregions and noted that concerns similar to those for the African region, such as national capacity, were applicable.

55. As at 1 June 2006, 11 Organization of American States member States had ratified the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, which was adopted in June 1999 and came into force in November 2002.[5] On 30 November 2006, a meeting of States Parties will be held to begin preparations for the first Conference of States Parties in 2009. In the field of small arms and light weapons, as at 1 June 2006, 26 member States had ratified the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, which came into force in 1998.

56. In Central America, significant progress has also been achieved since the last review of the Register. In September 2003, the Presidents of Central America adopted a Programme for Arms Limitation and Control for Reaching a Reasonable Balance of Forces and Promoting Stability, Mutual Confidence, and Transparency in Central America. Their Joint Declaration called upon all Central American States to urgently implement the Regional Balance of Forces programme and instructed the Central American Security Commission to prepare an implementation and follow-up schedule. The Central American Integration System has also adopted a Code of Conduct of the Central American States on the Transfer of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

Asia and the Pacific

57. In the region of Asia and the Pacific, reporting increased significantly between 1999 and 2000. Since then, an average level of 31 reporting States has been maintained each year. The highest level of participation was for calendar year 2003, when 33 States reported. Among those States reporting to the Register, consistency remains high.

58. As with other regions, levels of participation varied by subregion. Participation has remained low in Western Asia. The Group noted that participation was affected by security concerns and threat perceptions, as well as national capacity that impacted on transparency and confidence-building efforts.

59. Since the last review of the Register, the United States of America, Japan, China and others have engaged in consultations to achieve regional progress on arms transparency, particularly in relation to the United Nations Register. Such efforts to facilitate the continued progress of the Register are ongoing.

[5] For more details, see A/58/274, para. 55; see also http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2002/9259.htm.

Europe

60. Participation by the European States remains the highest among regions of the world. In calendar year 2004, 21 of 22 States in Eastern Europe reported, while in 2002, universal participation occurred in the East European subregion. Consistency in reporting among States in Europe also remains notably high, with only five States not reporting annually since 2001.

61. In September 2003, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) organized a workshop to promote awareness of practical questions concerning confidence- and security-building measures, the information exchange regime and its principles regarding transparency on military-related issues. In February 2005, OSCE held a conference on the Treaty on Open Skies to review all aspects of treaty implementation and to discuss the Treaty's continued relevance for promoting security and stability through openness and transparency. In May 2004, OSCE decided to adopt the principles developed under the Wassenaar Arrangement to tighten controls over the export of MANPADS with a view to reducing the risk of terrorism involving such weapons. The 55-member body agreed to incorporate those principles into their national practices and regulations. In February 2006, OSCE held a high-level seminar to promote greater transparency and openness by moving forward its dialogue on military doctrines.

B. Assessment of the workshop series

62. The Group reviewed the three regional workshops held since 2003. These included two held in Nairobi in 2004 and 2005, respectively, and one in Fiji in 2004. The latter was held in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme. The Group noted that in the view of all of the workshop participants, the Register remained a valuable instrument for confidence-building and that, in this regard, the Register would benefit from increased participation by States. The Group also noted the concerns raised by some States related to reasons for not reporting, as well as the observation that small arms and light weapons were of special relevance for Africa but such weapons had not been duly taken into account in the Register.

63. The Group endorsed the view of workshop participants that the workshop forum provided a valuable opportunity for Member States to raise awareness about the Register, which could enhance participation in the Register, and that such a forum also provided an important platform for informal consultations among the delegates, the Secretariat and the sponsoring Governments.

C. Enhancing implementation at the regional level

64. The Group expressed the view that measures to enhance regional and subregional reporting must be sustained, complementing broader efforts towards greater openness, confidence-building and transparency in the regions, including through the adoption of legally binding instruments, as appropriate. The Group recognized the security concerns of States in some regions and welcomed efforts within regions to exchange views on transparency issues, expressing the hope that these would enhance the development of the Register and increase regional reporting. The Group noted that in cooperation with the United Nations, regional

and subregional organizations, where appropriate, could play an important role in such efforts.

65. The Group reaffirmed the importance of regional and subregional workshops, as well as discussions and presentations on the Register at other meetings, as important measures to promote participation and receive feedback for the Register's further development.

66. The Group believed that efforts at raising awareness should be focused, in particular, in those regions where consistency in reporting was less and where the scope to enhance participation could be greater. The Group noted that technical assistance with the preparation of annual returns, at the request of States, could benefit some States in certain regions. Such technical assistance could form part of the workshop or be undertaken on an ad hoc basis upon request. The Group also noted with gratitude the efforts of some States through multilateral, regional, subregional or bilateral efforts to promote the Register, for example, through sponsoring and hosting workshops and supporting the production of publications by the Secretariat on the Register.

67. The Group reinforced the need to use opportunities that existed for greater partnership within the United Nations system to promote the Register. The Group also observed the value of strengthening relationships with relevant regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and, in that regard, noted the Secretariat's cooperation with some of them.

68. In addition, the Group encouraged Member States to include the United Nations Register in relevant workshops or other meetings organized by them on disarmament-related matters.

IV. Operation of the Register

A. Reporting methods

69. The Group of Governmental Experts noted that the simplified reporting form was used widely by States submitting a "nil" return. The Group also expressed satisfaction with the use of the "Remarks" column in the standardized reporting form, which increased the value of information provided on arms transfers, thereby further strengthening the confidence-building role of the Register.

70. The Group observed that the reporting method for declaring export and/or imports by participating States lacked uniformity. Of the 51 States that reported transfers for the calendar year 2004, 29 did not use the amended standardized forms. The standardized reporting forms were amended in 2003 to include MANPADS as a subcategory (b) under category VII.[6] A broadly similar pattern can be discerned for the calendar year 2005, for which submissions have not been completed.

71. The Group noted that a number of States continued to provide additional background information on a voluntary basis, in addition to their submissions on arms transfers. States provided information on procurement through national production and military holdings using different reporting formats. A limited

[6] The forms are also accessible in the official languages of the United Nations on the website of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html.

number of States also provided information on transfers of small arms and light weapons, using their own reporting methods.

72. With regard to reporting on procurement and/or holdings, the Group noted that only 5 of 29 States used the relevant columns of the "standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms" when providing such information, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/54. Of these five, three replaced "subcategory (b)" of category VII with "MANPADS", when reporting transfers of MANPADS.

73. The precise definition of "international arms transfer" varies among States. In this regard, the Group observed that of the 51 States that reported transfers for the calendar year 2004, 29 did not use the standardized forms which include an endnote for "National criteria on transfer". A broadly similar pattern seems to be emerging for the calendar year 2005, for which submissions have not been completed. For the purposes of information, clarification and confirmation, the Group noted the value of providing information on national criteria on transfer, as requested in the standardized reporting form.

B. Contacts among Member States

74. Particularly in view of variations in the national definition of transfer, the Group reaffirmed the importance of direct bilateral contact between States as an important means to avoid and/or resolve possible discrepancies in the data submitted by exporters and importers, as well as other issues relevant to the Register. In that regard, the Group acknowledged the value of appointing a national point of contact, as requested in the standardized reporting forms of the Register. Such points of contact also serve as an efficient channel of communication between national capitals and the Secretariat to facilitate and expedite the submission of reports for the Register and address related matters.

75. The Group observed that good progress had been made by States since the last review in providing information on national points of contact. So far, 122 States have provided information, although a number of them have yet to provide fax numbers and/or e-mail addresses, while some have not provided any information on contact details. The Group recognized the importance for Member States to provide up-to-date information on national points of contact to the Secretariat.

C. Access to data and information reported

76. The Group emphasized that easy and reliable access to data and information submitted by States to the United Nations Register played an important factor in enhancing the value of the Register as a confidence-building tool. The Group discussed ways of further strengthening the utility of the website as a means of accessing information on the Register, including electronic filing of returns and enhancing the role of its database.

77. The Group noted with satisfaction the role of the Secretariat in increasing awareness and familiarity among States about the Register. The Secretariat maintains on its website a wide range of documents directly related to the Register and the subject of arms transparency, including the annual consolidated reports of

the Secretary-General, the reports of the groups of governmental experts and the standardized reporting forms. The Secretariat has prepared and actively disseminated documents on the Register, including the updated *Information Booklet* on the Register in English, French and Spanish as well as a publication highlighting the recommendations of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts. The Secretariat also maintains a document on its website entitled "Questions and Answers", which is designed to provide easy access to States on guidelines in preparing their annual submissions to the Register. In addition, the Secretariat circulates information papers, containing tables and graphs, on the progress of the Register to the delegations during the annual session of the First Committee and, as appropriate, provides information to relevant United Nations Security Council sanctions committees.

78. The Group noted the increased number of States providing an electronic version of their hard-copy annual reports to the Register and encouraged this trend, as it expedited the compilation of data and information submitted to the Secretariat.

79. The Group examined a report prepared by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in response to a request by the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts for a feasibility study on electronic filing of reports to the Register by Member States, and noted that an electronic data submission system can be developed, utilizing the existing resources and expertise within the Department.

D. Role of the United Nations Secretariat

80. The Group commended the active role played by the Secretariat in promoting the Register and facilitating its progress, including efforts to raise extrabudgetary support and assistance to organize regional and subregional workshops as well as its efforts to brief regional organizations on the progress of the Register. In that regard it noted the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations and the potential for cooperation with relevant research institutes, as appropriate.

81. The Group appreciated the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in enhancing awareness of the operation and procedures of the Register as well as encouraging timely submission of reports. The Group also noted with appreciation the Department's efforts to produce and disseminate useful and educative information material related to the Register and for regularly upgrading and updating the Register website, assisting States with technical queries, and in highlighting the Register both within and outside the United Nations system.

82. The Group reaffirmed the central role of the Secretariat in facilitating the continued progress of the Register, which should be one of the primary missions of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. In this regard, the Group reiterated that the mandated tasks related to the Register require strong and sustained support by the United Nations system, including adequate financial and personnel resources.

V. Development of the Register

A. General

83. The General Assembly, by paragraph 8 of its resolution 46/36 L, inter alia, initiated the process, through a panel of experts, to prepare a report on the modalities for early expansion of the scope of the Register by the addition of further categories of equipment and inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production. The 1992 Panel proposed an indicative list of equipment for future consideration, which subsequent groups of governmental experts in 1994, 1997 and 2000 discussed without any agreement being reached.

84. The 2003 Group of Governmental Experts, however, reached agreement on technical adjustments to category III of the Register by lowering the reporting threshold for large-calibre artillery systems from 100 mm to 75 mm and by including MANPADS as a subcategory in category VII. The Group also agreed to allow for additional voluntary background information on the transfer of small arms and light weapons. Those recommendations were adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (see resolution 58/54).

85. The 2006 Group of Governmental Experts examined in detail the question of additional technical adjustments to the seven categories of equipment covered by the Register and the expansion of its scope. The Group took into account recent observations of the Secretary-General on the Register, as well as other references made to it in various United Nations documents. The Group also took note of the views expressed by some Member States on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, as well as on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 58/54 and paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 60/226.

86. The Group noted the original purpose of the Register, which was to avoid excessive and destabilizing arms build-ups that would pose a threat to national, regional and international peace and security, particularly by aggravating tensions and conflict situations, and also that increased transparency in the international arms trade would enhance confidence, promote stability, help States to exercise restraint, ease tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security. In this regard, the Group also noted that there was a need for a balanced approach in enhancing the relevance of the Register while pursuing the goal of universal participation.

87. The Group engaged in a substantive discussion of the Register's further development. In this regard, the Group observed that a flexible approach, which would take into account the different priorities, regional contexts, capacities of Member States and the effect this could have on participation, would be the best way forward.

88. The Group examined the concepts of force projection and force multiplier capabilities owing to technological and doctrinal developments affecting the conduct of modern warfare during the years of operation of the Register. The Group recognized the different levels of development in the field of military technologies and doctrines of various States and the conceptual differences among them with regard to whether such systems should fall within the scope of the Register's seven categories. The issues were discussed without prejudice to the differing views of

States with regard to the offensive-defensive nature of the weapon systems. The Group also examined the question of whether adjustments of this type would affect the focus of the Register and participation.

B. Relevance of the Register

89. The Group undertook wide-ranging and in-depth discussions on the relevance of the Register at the global, regional and subregional levels. The Group observed that relatively high reporting levels indicated that the Register is viewed at the global level as an important transparency and confidence-building instrument.

90. The Group noted, however, that the Register's existing scope was perceived to be more relevant to the security concerns of States in some regions than in other regions. The Group also noted that the Register's traditional focus on conventional weapons to conduct large-scale offensive operations failed to adequately address the small arms and light weapons of particular concern in some regions and subregions, which rendered the Register less relevant to those particular regions.

91. The Group believed that in considering adjustments to the Register's categories and its existing scope, it was important to take into account security and capacity concerns, as well as the effect these could have on the level of participation in the Register.

C. Categories covered by the Register

92. On the question of adjustments and expansion of the Register's scope, the discussions of the Group benefited from contributions by all its members, including discussion papers on a broad range of issues and proposals for possible options, as well as background documentation for consideration by the Group. With regard to technical adjustments to the existing seven categories of conventional arms covered by the Register, the Group discussed comprehensively technological developments and other related issues pertaining to each category.

Category I
Battle tanks

93. The Group noted the trend towards lighter, more mobile and deployable tanks, potentially with a smaller gun to offset the lighter weight. With regard to the existing definition of battle tanks, the Group concluded that it provided adequate coverage and, since all tanks were covered either by category I or II, no further specification was necessary.

Category II
Armoured combat vehicles

94. The Group discussed technological advances in this category since the Register's establishment, the implications for transparency and the problems of distinguishing specific military capabilities from those which have civilian applications. The Group also discussed trends towards smaller armoured combat vehicles carrying fewer than four troops and weaponry less than 12.5 mm for reconnaissance. During the discussion, the Group considered proposals for possible

inclusion, in particular armoured vehicles designed for bridge-laying as well as vehicles designed for reconnaissance and electronic warfare. The Group also discussed clarifying elements in the existing definition of this category for reporting purposes.

Category III
Large-calibre artillery systems

95. The Group recalled the reduction of the reporting threshold in this category from 100 mm to 75 mm, as agreed by the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts, and discussed the question of further reduction, in particular lowering the reporting threshold to 50 mm, including how definitions of artillery systems and light weapons might be affected as a result of such a change, as well as whether such a reduction could be achieved within the existing title and definition of this category, or if it was appropriate to change the existing title and definition. In addition, the Group discussed small arms and light weapons in the context of this category, as well as gun tractors specifically designed for towing artillery.

Category IV
Combat aircraft

96. The Group considered adjustments to this category, including force projection capabilities, such as aircraft designed to perform military transport and airdrop missions, as well as air-to-air refuelling. The Group also examined whether the reference to "versions of combat aircraft" in the existing definition covered all military aircraft that performed reconnaissance missions. In addition, the Group discussed intensively developments in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and the observation that category IV already covered those unmanned platforms that were versions of combat aircraft or that otherwise fell within the existing definition but not specially designed UAVs. The Group also discussed whether other types of UAVs, for example those designed for reconnaissance, should be covered by the Register as well as their relevance to the Register.[7]

Category V
Attack helicopters

97. In parallel with discussions on UAVs under category IV, the Group also discussed these issues in the context of category V. The Group also discussed the possible inclusion of helicopters that performed airdrop missions and troop transport roles. The Group also examined the question of including systems that performed combat support functions, such as mine-laying missions and communication and command of troops.

Category VI
Warships

98. The discussion on technical adjustments to warships focused on lowering the tonnage of surface vessels and submarines to 500 metric tons. The Group also discussed other reporting thresholds such as 150 metric tons for surface vessels and 50 metric tons for submarines or the option of removing the range limits for missiles and torpedoes. The question was raised whether vessels that would be covered by

[7] Discussion on this issue also took place in the context of category VII.

the proposed reduction in tonnage should be regarded as being offensive or defensive in nature. During the discussion, the Group noted that the geographical and maritime context varied among States, and for a number of States with certain types of coastal boundaries surface vessels of smaller tonnage were more relevant than larger warships, such as blue-water vessels.

Category VII
Missiles and missile launchers

99. The Group discussed technological developments regarding missiles and missile launchers, including the issue of whether some types of UAVs could be included within the existing definition of category VII. The Group noted the inclusion of MANPADS as an exception, as recommended by the 2003 Group. The Group also discussed a proposal for the inclusion of surface-to-air missiles in the context of this category.

D. Expansion of the scope of the Register

100. The Group discussed the question of treating procurement through national production on the same basis as reporting on the export and/or import of arms. The Group noted that information on procurement through national production could make transparency in arms acquisition more comprehensive and balanced. The Group also noted in this regard that a limited number of States were producers of the major conventional weapons covered by the Register and a number of those producers reported procurement through national production annually. The Group welcomed such voluntary reporting, while recognizing that security concerns, among others, could make it difficult for some States to provide such information.

101. The Group also discussed retaining the current status of reporting on procurement through national production, as part of additional background information, while enabling interested States that wished to do so to provide such information on the basis of the seven categories for reporting arms transfers. It also noted the importance, in the context of reporting transfers and providing additional background information, of including information on the model and type of equipment reported.

102. The Group considered the significance of reporting on military holdings, while recognizing the sensitivities related to reporting such information. The Group welcomed such voluntary reporting, noting that the same concerns applicable to reporting on procurement through national production, such as security concerns, could affect decisions of whether to report such information.

103. With regard to reporting transfers of small arms and light weapons (SALW), the Group took note of the agreement of the 2003 Group on adjustments to category III to incorporate specific types of light weapons by lowering the reporting threshold for artillery systems to 75 mm calibre. The Group also noted that there was no transparency instrument covering international transfers of SALW between States, although those transfers were believed to comprise a significant portion of the global trade in conventional weapons.

104. The Group discussed introducing an eighth category in the Register for reporting SALW transfers on an optional basis, recognizing that some States might

not be in a position to report for various reasons. The Group also discussed retaining the current status of reporting on SALW transfers, as part of additional background information, while providing, for interested States that were in a position to do so, the option of reporting on the basis of a standardized form. In this regard, the Group noted that, so far, the limited number of States providing such data to the Register had used different methods for reporting SALW transfers.

105. The Group also discussed a number of additional conventional military capabilities that contribute to the operational effectiveness of conventional arms under the existing scope of the Register, particularly related to categories II, IV, V and VI. In particular, the Group discussed troop transportation roles under categories IV and V and the inclusion of such capabilities within the scope of the Register or as additional background information in national reports.

106. In the discussions on modifications to the existing categories, the Group noted that States wishing to go beyond the existing definitions and report on military equipment with additional capabilities, were not prohibited from doing so. It was a State's sovereign decision as to what to report to the Register. States going beyond the existing definitions, however, were encouraged to utilize the "Remarks" column to provide model/type information on the item being transferred so as to avoid diluting the effectiveness and the relevance of the information being reported.

107. With regard to weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, the Group recalled the position stated in paragraph 90 of the report of the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts on this matter (A/55/281), as follows:

> The Group recognized the importance of the principle of transparency and its relevance to weapons of mass destruction. In its consideration of proposals to add a new category to include such weapons, the Group reviewed the nature of the Register, regional security concerns and existing international legal instruments concerning the subject matter, as well as General Assembly resolution 46/36 L. In view of all these factors, particularly taking into account that the Register covered conventional arms only, the Group agreed that the question of transparency in weapons of mass destruction was an issue that should be addressed by the General Assembly.

E. Review of the Register

108. The Group emphasized the importance of conducting periodic reviews of the Register in order to ensure the continued progress in its operation and further development. Such a process would help to achieve universal participation and enhance the Register's relevance and effectiveness as a confidence-building instrument in a changing technological environment. In that context, it recognized the value of holding regional workshops and seminars, organized to promote the Register, as a means of receiving feedback on the Register, as well as receiving input from meetings at relevant regional and international organizations.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

109. The Group concluded that significant progress had been made towards achieving a relatively high level of participation annually in the United Nations Register. It was important, however, to make continued progress towards the goal of universal participation in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Register as a global confidence-building instrument.

110. The Group also concluded that transfers involving only States Members of the United Nations should be reported to the Register.

111. The Group believed that efforts should continue to be made to achieve more consistent participation by States and to encourage non-participating States to join the Register. Such efforts should include workshops, increased cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and relevant regional/subregional organizations, as well as outreach activities by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, including its regional centres.

112. The Group noted that regional and subregional efforts to achieve greater openness, confidence and transparency, including through legally binding instruments as appropriate, would facilitate the progress of the Register towards universal participation, as well as strengthen the prospects for its further development. The Group also noted the value of including sessions on the Register in the agenda of relevant meetings of regional and subregional organizations, other groups of Member States as well as organs/agencies of the United Nations system.

113. The Group also recognized the need to provide the Department for Disarmament Affairs with adequate assistance and support to organize workshops and to carry out other outreach activities to promote the Register. It welcomed the provision of direct support to the Secretariat through in kind contributions or financial contributions to the appropriate trust fund. It also recognized that Member States could provide bilateral assistance to other Member States to support initiatives related to the Register.

114. In addition to increasing participation in the Register, efforts should continue to be made to strengthen the scope of the Register. In this regard, the Group noted that a flexible approach, as discussed in chapter V, would help to optimize progress towards achieving those mutually reinforcing objectives.

115. The Group encouraged Member States that were in a position to do so to provide additional background information, pending further development of the Register.

116. The Group expressed satisfaction with the progress made by States in the use of the optional "Remarks" column in the standardized reporting form, as its use enhanced the quality of information provided on international arms transfers. The Group encouraged the use of the "Remarks" column, including information on model and type, for all equipment reported to the Register.

117. The Group reaffirmed the importance of encouraging all States to report regularly and in a timely manner to the Register, including using the simplified "nil" reporting form, where appropriate, to confirm that no international transfer had

taken place in a given calendar year. In terms of transparency, a "nil" report is as important as a report on actual transfers.

118. The Group encouraged States to report by the 31 May deadline as far as possible in order to facilitate the early compilation of data and information. The Secretariat should continue its practice of circulating, under cover of a note verbale, the reporting forms to Member States at the beginning of each year, as well as subsequent reminders, to help facilitate timely submissions. The Secretariat should also send the note verbale and attachments by electronic means to national points of contact.

119. The Group expressed satisfaction with the progress made in providing details of national points of contact for the use of the Secretariat and for onward dissemination to Member States. Such information facilitated accurate and efficient reporting by allowing for corroboration of the data submitted as well as providing a means for clarification between suppliers and recipient States. The Group encouraged greater progress as in some cases contact details provided were incomplete, while no contact information was provided in other cases. The Group identified electronic mail as a particularly useful means of communication and encouraged States to provide that contact information in particular.

120. The Group also noted with satisfaction the improvements made in the Register website of the Department for Disarmament Affairs with a view to providing easy access to the data and information provided by Member States as well as other documents related to the Register and transparency in armaments. The Group noted its technical and operational limitations and emphasized the need for a technological updating to make it more useful and user-friendly.

121. The Group concluded that the Department for Disarmament Affairs should continue to actively support and promote the United Nations Register as one of its primary missions. In that connection, the Group recognized the need to strengthen the Department for Disarmament Affairs to enable it to fulfil its mandated responsibilities in the area of arms transparency.

122. In order to facilitate universal participation and further development of the Register, the Group concluded that the review process, initiated at the time of the establishment of the Register, should be continued. Such a review process is essential to furthering consensus-building and ensuring the continued progress of the Register.

B. Recommendations

123. After extensive and in-depth discussions on the question of technical adjustments to the seven categories of the Register, as well as other possible changes to its existing scope, the Group arrived at the following decisions.

124. The Group recommends that the definition of category VI, "Warships" be amended to reflect the lowering of the tonnage of vessels from 750 metric tons to 500 metric tons. The definition should read as follows:

VI. Warships

Vessels or submarines armed and equipped for military use with a standard displacement of 500 metric tons or above, and those with a standard displacement of less than 500 metric tons, equipped for launching missiles with a range of at least 25 kilometres or torpedoes with similar range.

125. The Group recommends that Member States that are in a position to do so provide data and information on small arms and light weapons transfers to the Register as part of additional background information on the basis of the standardized reporting form on international transfers of small arms and light weapons (see annexes I and II to the present report), as adopted by the Group, or any other methods they deem appropriate.

126. In addition, and also taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts (A/58/274), the Group recommends the following:

(a) Transfers involving only States Members of the United Nations should be reported to the United Nations Register;

(b) Member States should participate in the United Nations Register in order to achieve the shared goals of this global transparency mechanism, including universal participation;

(c) Member States should enhance awareness of the Register and the importance of participating on a regular basis;

(d) Member States should submit "nil" reports to confirm that they do not have any international transfer to declare. Member States in a position to do so are encouraged to make use of the "Remarks" column in the standardized reporting form to furnish additional data on models or types. They are also encouraged to provide data on additional background information;

(e) Member States should report promptly in order to help to ensure the early dissemination of data and information submitted to the Register and in that connection should use the standardized reporting form provided annually in the note verbale;

(f) Member States should continue to provide details of their national point of contact in the standardized reporting forms when submitting their annual report to the Register and ensure that this information is up-to-date when submitting annual reports to the Register;

(g) The Secretariat should maintain an updated list of national points of contact and request such information, where required, in order to keep its record up-to-date and circulate it to all Member States;

(h) The Secretariat should continue to make all possible efforts to promote the Register as a confidence-building measure;

(i) The Secretariat should continue to strengthen the role of the regional centres of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in facilitating the progress of the Register at the regional level;

(j) The workshop series should be sustained with a view to encouraging greater participation as well as obtaining feedback from regions/subregions on the operation and further development of the Register;

(k) The Secretariat, with the support and assistance of interested Member States, should continue to strengthen cooperation within the United Nations and with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations with a view to promoting the Register and its role as a confidence-building measure;

(l) The Department for Disarmament Affairs should overhaul the Register database on its website with a view to making it more user-friendly and up-to-date technologically;

(m) Since the resources of the Secretariat devoted to operating and managing the United Nations Register are also utilized for implementing other departmental responsibilities, including operating and maintaining the standardized United Nations instrument for reporting military expenditures, it should consider providing adequate resources, including a full-time General Service staff for data inputting and other support services on a regular basis;

(n) The Department should conduct a pilot project with the support of interested Member States to test the feasibility of electronic filing of reports to the Register in order to determine the practical requirements for making such a facility available to Member States;

(o) Member States should consider providing support and assistance to the Secretariat in carrying out the recommendations addressed to it, including the holding of workshops and seminars to advance the objectives of the Register;

(p) Member States should consider providing direct bilateral support to those States undertaking Register-related activities;

(q) Member States should also consider including the subject of the United Nations Register in workshops and other relevant meetings organized by them in the disarmament field.

127. The Secretariat should continue to undertake the following activities:

(a) Update the *Information Booklet* on the United Nations Register and distribute it to all Member States as well as relevant regional organizations, and make the *Information Booklet* available on the Register website, both as a hypertext linked series of pages and as a downloadable document;

(b) Send a note verbale, with the reporting forms and the categories of equipment covered by the Register, to Member States by the beginning of each year as well as follow-up reminders, including electronic reminders to national points of contact, where appropriate;

(c) Ensure that all information relating to the Register is electronically available as soon as possible;

(d) Provide the General Assembly with the annual consolidated report of data and information on international arms transfers submitted by Member States, as well as the voluntary submission of data and information on procurement through national production and military holdings, as well as small arms and light weapons transfers, together with an index of other additional background information;

(e) Ensure that all basic data and information relevant to the Register are available electronically in all official languages of the United Nations;

(f) Develop and expand the Register website, including establishing links with other relevant organizations/institutions;

(g) Facilitate informal meetings, such as briefings by the Secretariat, on the progress of the Register on the sidelines of the meetings of the First Committee and other relevant occasions;

(h) Encourage and facilitate the inclusion of sessions on the Register in the agenda of relevant meetings of regional and subregional organizations, other groupings of Member States as well as organs/agencies of the United Nations system.

Annex I

Information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons[a,b] (exports)

Exports

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact _____

(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, e-mail)

(FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

A	B	C	D	E	REMARKS	
	Final importer State(s)	*Number of items*	*State of origin (if not exporter)*	*Intermediate location (if any)*	*Description of item*	*Comments on the transfer*
SMALL ARMS						
1. Revolvers and self-loading pistols						
2. Rifles and carbines						
3. Sub-machine guns						
4. Assault rifles						
5. Light machine guns						
6. Others						
LIGHT WEAPONS						
1. Heavy machine guns						
2. Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers						
3. Portable anti-tank guns						
4. Recoilless rifles						
5. Portable anti-tank missile launchers and rocket systems						
6. Mortars of calibres less than 75 mm						
7. Others						

National criteria on transfers:

[a] The standardized forms provide options for reporting only aggregate quantities under the generic categories of "Small arms" and "Light weapons" and/or under their respective subcategories. See the United Nations Information Booklet 2006 (http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html) for questions and answers regarding the reporting of small arms and light weapons.

[b] The categories provided in the reporting form do not constitute a definition of "Small arms" and "Light weapons".

Annex II

Information on international transfers of small arms and light weapons[a,b] (imports)

Imports

Reporting country: _____

National point of contact: _____

(Organization, Division/Section, telephone, fax, e-mail)

(FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY)

Calendar year: _____

A	B	C	D	E	REMARKS	
	Exporter State(s)	*Number of items*	*State of origin (if not exporter)*	*Intermediate location (if any)*	*Description of item*	*Comments on the transfer*
SMALL ARMS						
1. Revolvers and self-loading pistols						
2. Rifles and carbines						
3. Sub-machine guns						
4. Assault rifles						
5. Light machine guns						
6. Others						
LIGHT WEAPONS						
1. Heavy machine guns						
2. Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers						
3. Portable anti-tank guns						
4. Recoilless rifles						
5. Portable anti-tank missile launchers and rocket systems						
6. Mortars of calibres less than 75 mm						
7. Others						

National criteria on transfers:

[a] The standardized forms provide options for reporting only aggregate quantities under the generic categories of "Small arms" and "Light weapons" and/or under their respective subcategories. See the United Nations Information Booklet 2006 (http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html) for questions and answers regarding the reporting of small arms and light weapons.

[b] The categories provided in the reporting form do not constitute a definition of "Small arms" and "Light weapons".

Annex III

List of documents

Tables and graphs

- Global participation table/graph
- Regional participation tables/graph
- Subregional participation table/graph
- Regional reporting ratios table
- Reporting of transfer/"nil"
- Reporting of exports/imports
- Reporting on additional background information
- Submission by 31 May deadline
- Procurement through national production, 2000-2004
- Military holdings, 2000-2004
- Use of the "Remarks" column
- Frequency of reporting
- Non-participating States captured in the reports by participating States, 2002-2004
- Register data on transfers category I-VII, 2002-2004
- Regional breakdown of United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (Comtrade) on small arms and light weapons (SALW)
- United Nations Comtrade: top 20 exporters and importers of SALW in 2004
- Exports and imports reported to United Nations Comtrade on SALW
- Regional participation in the Register, 1992-2004

Reports of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

- Report of the Secretary-General of 13 August 2003 transmitting the report of the 2003 Group (A/58/274)
- Report of the Secretary-General of 9 August 2000 transmitting the report of the 2000 Group (A/55/281)
- Report of the Secretary-General of 29 August 1997 transmitting the report of the 1997 Group (A/52/316 and Corr.2)
- Report of the Secretary-General of 22 September 1994 transmitting the report of the 1994 Group (A/49/316)
- Report of the Secretary-General of 14 August 1992 transmitting the report of the 1992 Panel of Governmental Technical Experts (A/47/342 and Corr.1)

- Report of the Secretary-General of 9 September 1991 transmitting the study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms (A/46/301)

Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly

- Resolution 60/226 of 23 December 2005
- Resolution 58/54 of 8 December 2003
- Resolution 57/75 of 22 November 2002
- Resolutions 54/54 I and O of 1 December 1999
- Resolutions 52/38 B and R of 9 December 1997
- Resolution 49/75 C of 15 December 1994
- Resolution 46/36 L of 6 December 1991

Other relevant documents

- Note verbale and attachments (DDA/39-2006/TIA)
- *2004 Information Booklet* on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms
- Report of the Secretary-General on small arms of 7 February 2005 (S/2005/69)
- Note by the Secretary-General of 2 December 2004 transmitting the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibilities" (A/59/565 and Corr.1)
- Report of the Secretary-General of 27 April 2006 entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy" (A/60/825)
- Letter dated 15 February 2005 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2005/83)

Regional agreements

- Southern African Development Community Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, 2004
- Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, April 2004
- Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, and Other Related Materials, 14 June 2006
- Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, adopted June 1999
- Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, came into force 1998

- Programme for Arms Limitation and Control for Reaching a Reasonable Balance of Forces and Promoting Stability, Mutual Confidence, and Transparency in Central America, adopted September 2003
- Central American Integration System Code of Conduct of the Central American States on the Transfer of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, 2005
- Treaty on Open Skies, entered in force 2002
- Wassenaar Arrangement: Elements for Export Controls of Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS)
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2000
- OSCE, Vienna Document, 1999
- Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (adapted), 1999
- OSCE, Principles governing conventional arms transfers, 1993

Others

- Transparency in armaments (2006 edition) (non-paper by expert from the United Kingdom)
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data on MANPADS
- SIPRI data on warships
- SIPRI data on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) International transfers/licensed production